

JAN EDITORIAL

A Research Portfolio: Transformational change by nursing, midwifery and care staff across health and care (787 words)

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It is widely accepted that nursing research is paramount to help address the challenges facing the international nursing workforce in caring for a growing and ageing population. Nursing, midwifery and care staff make up the largest proportion of the workforce across the NHS. In the UK, there are over 693,000 registered nurses and midwives (Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2018), all striving to prevent and tackle health inequalities and improve the care experience for patients, individuals and populations. The role that nursing, midwifery and care staff play should not be underestimated and specifically in this editorial, we describe a new research portfolio which signposts to examples of nursing, midwifery and care staff led research to demonstrate the significant academic contribution of these professions to transformational change across the health and care system. The Research Portfolio (NHS England, 2019a) showcases examples of research studies that demonstrate leadership in research and practice, all aligned to the key priorities outlined in the NHS Long Term Plan (LTP) (NHS England, 2019b). Evidence underpins so much of what we do and there is a huge opportunity to quantifiably demonstrate the contribution staff bring to the LTP, harnessing intelligence in closing gaps and addressing unwarranted variation in health and care.

We know there is a huge appetite from nursing and midwifery clinical academics to provide a gateway to integrated health education, research and clinical practice. The role of journals such as *JAN* is clear but translating and publishing nursing research into the highest impact international nursing journals requires robust studies. We are aware that this can sometimes be a challenge for clinical staff to engage with and can therefore result in slow progress for translation to practice. Therefore, other mediums are required to help promote nursing research and provide studies that can both motivate and inform the wider nursing population. In this time of transformation, this research portfolio aims to provide a platform to demonstrate the key contribution that nursing, and midwifery practice brings to this ongoing change; and by drawing on evidence and evaluation we can quantify and demonstrate that huge impact in improving outcomes, and experience and make better use of resources.

Developed in collaboration with partners across the health and care system, the research portfolio aims to increase the visibility and promote nursing, midwifery and care staff research and has been developed and overseen by a task and finish group. The group consisted of a range of nursing and midwifery research leads from Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) across, representing wide ranging excellence in nursing and midwifery, co-chaired by NHS England and the Council of Deans of Health.

The portfolio highlights studies across the health and care system. Small and large-scale peer-reviewed, published research was considered by the task and finish group to provide a snapshot of the robust evidence base for clinical practice, care provision and policy development that exists and continues to evolve. Indeed, the studies cover a range of health and care areas, clinical and care priorities. An initial sixty case studies were launched on the NHS England and NHS Improvement nursing and midwifery web-pages, with more studies pending. The research portfolio is not intended to be an all-encompassing database of research, rather it is a resource to clearly articulate the research agenda in nursing and midwifery; to act as a stepping stone in continuing to promote research and the principles of research to a wider audience in a bid to making it mainstream. It is hoped that it may also offer a platform for Masters, doctoral and early career nursing studies as well as senior pieces and make them visible to the wider nursing community.

The studies provide a glimpse of the wealth of research across nursing, midwifery and care and the research portfolio signposts to the full article, providing a brief abstract for each piece included. The platform supports colleagues to access the articles, including how to register for an Open-Athens account to facilitate free access to a range of journals and other evidence-based resources for health and social care staff. This account is available to staff both in NHS and non-NHS organisations and students in England, with details available via National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2019). The research portfolio thereby provides an opportunity to demonstrate the nursing and midwifery research leadership and engage with local, national and international collaborations.

This portfolio echoes the wide-spread support across the professions for the advancement of Clinical Academic Careers for nursing, midwifery and care staff. It is hoped that the research portfolio with examples of nursing, midwifery and care staff led studies goes some way to put greater focus on research and evidence, equipping the future workforce and nursing leaders with the necessary skills to drive evidence-based improvements.

References

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